# UNITED NATIONS ROLE IN THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE NICARAGUAN RESISTANCE

UNITED NATIONS

# ONUCA

The task recently undertaken by the United Nations' youngest peace-keeping operation, the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), was without precedent in UN history. ONUCA's mission—the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance—involved the physical destruction of arms and military equipment voluntarily handed over by combatants.

Between 16 April and 29 June 1990 some 22,000 members of the Nicaraguan resistance were demobilized.

## ONUCA'S MANDATE

ONUCA was originally established by the Security Council on 7 November 1989 following a series of requests from the five Central American Governments* to verify these countries' compliance with their pledges to cease aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements in the region and not to allow their territory to be used for attacks on other States.

On 27 March 1990, the Security Council authorized an enlargement of the mandate of ONUCA and the addition of armed personnel to its strength in order to enable it to play a part in the voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance. On 20 April 1990, the Council authorized a further expansion of the mandate to enable ONUCA to monitor a cease-fire which had come into effect in Nicaragua and the separation of forces expected to result from the withdrawal of Nicaraguan Government troops from certain areas in the country. ONUCA, which originally had been composed only of unarmed military observers, was temporarily enlarged to include a 700-strong battalion from Venezuela, which was deployed in eight "security zones" (see map) to where the members of the Nicaraguan resistance were to proceed to be demobilized. It had been agreed that the weapons of the members of the resistance would be received by ONUCA which would destroy them *in situ*.

* Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

HONDURAS
NICARAGUA
TEGUCIGALPA
EL SALVADOR
COSTA RICA
PACIFIC OCEAN
CARIBBEAN SEA
NICARAGUA
REGION VII
NUEVA SEGOVIA
MADRIZ
REGION I
REGION VI
REGION II
REGION V
REGION III
REGION IV
REGION VIII
REGION IX
CHONTALES
MANAGUA
CARAZO
Cabo Gracias a Dios
Puerto Cabezas
Bilwaskarma
Waspam
Ibiimus
CAYOS MISKITOS
La Constancia
Bonanza
Rosita
Siuna
Limbaika
Prinzapolka
Makantaka
La Cruz de Rio Grande
Matiguás
Matagalpa
Jinotega
Estelí
Ocotal
Wiwilí
Somoto
Condega
Jalapa
Chinandega
Corinto
León
Chichigalpa
El Sauce
Sébaco
Muy Muy
Boaco
Camoapá
Santo Domingo
Juigalpa
Santo Tomás
Acoyapa
Morrito
Nueva Guinea
Monkey Point
Punta de Perlas
ISLAS DEL MAIZ
Corn Island
El Rama
Bluefields
El Bluff
Río Escondido
Río Kama
Río Punta Gorda
Río Grande de Matagalpa
Río Kurinwás
Río Tuma
Río Coco
Río Wanki
Río Patuca
Río Negro
Río Kukalaya
Río Prinzapolka
Río San Juan
Río San Carlos
Río Sapoá
Río Ochomogo
Río Mayales
Río Tipitapa
Río Escalante
Río Grande
Río Viejo
Río Tamarindo
Río Ostional
Río Nosara
Río Sarapiquí
Río Frío
Río Colorado
Río Sixaola
Río Tarire
Río Pacuare
Río Reventazón
Río Parismina
Río Tortuguero
Río Matina
Río Estrella
Río Banano
Río Chirripó Grande
Río Pacuare
Río Grande de Térraba
Río Coto Colorado
Río Corredores
Río Conte
Río Sierpe
Río Esquinas
Río Claro
Río General
Río Barú
Río Térraba
Río Coto
Río Java
Río Sucio
Río Savegre
Río Naranjo
Río Parrita
Río Tárcoles
Río Grande de Tárcoles
Río Virilla
Río Tiribí
Río Torres
Río María Aguilar
Río Pirrís
Río Candelaria
Río Grande de Orotina
Río Barranca
Río Jesús María
Río Tempisque
Río Bebedero
Río Sapoá
Río Frío
Río Colorado
Río Sixaola
Río Tarire
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Río Pacuare
Río Grande de Térraba
Río Coto Colorado
Río Corredores
Río Conte
Río Sierpe
Río Esquinas
Río Claro
Río General

## DEMOBILIZATION PROCESS: BRIEF OVERVIEW

The voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance in Honduras got under way on 16 April when members of the Atlantic Front (Yatama) of the resistance handed over their weapons and military equipment to ONUCA personnel at La Kiatara, Honduras.

According to a series of agreements reached by the Nicaraguan parties on 18-19 April in Managua, the members of the resistance inside Nicaragua were to be demobilized during the period from 25 April to 10 June. During the first three weeks of May, however, the pace of demobilization was very slow. On 23 May, the Security Council expressed its concern at this, noting that the process must be accelerated if the deadline of 10 June was to be met. Following a further agreement signed by the Nicaraguan parties on 29-30 May, the "Managua Protocol on Disarmament", the rate of demobilization increased substantially and proceeded regularly during the first week of June. Despite this increase, however, the deadline could not be met. On 8 June, the Security Council, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, agreed to extend the tasks entrusted to ONUCA in relation to the demobilization process, specifying that these tasks would lapse with the completion of the process not later than 29 June.

Between 16 April and 29 June 1990, 22,000 members of the Nicaraguan resistance were demobilized in Honduras and Nicaragua, following which each was given a certificate of demobilization. Their weapons were destroyed by ONUCA in the security zones (see photos). The civilian aspects of the demobilization—repatriation, relocation or resettlement—of the members of the resistance and their families were the responsibility of CIAV (International Support and Verification Commission), a co-operative effort of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

Following the completion of the demobilization process in Nicaragua, the Venezuelan battalion is being withdrawn and ONUCA will continue to carry out its mandate in Central America, as originally defined by the Security Council in November 1989.

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